

Vol.24

Mentor Director, Representative Executive Officer, Executive Chairman & CEO Hitachi, Ltd.



Toshiaki Higashihara

Keidanren *Women's Executive Network*

Leadership Mentor Program

Creating leaders with the confidence to develop their own style of leadership



Keidanren Women's Executive Network

Leadership Mentor Program Vol.24

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Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are important

While major business decisions require a thorough top-down approach, the exact opposite (bottom-up approach) is essential to enhance employee motivation and nurture engagement. If employees can see their contribution towards society realized through their work, this can become a great driver to better change Japan and the world. If each and every employee is aware of their connections with society, and recognizes social issues as if they were their own personal issues, this would certainly help us achieve greater things.

The need to step out of the Japanese lock-step culture

Social issues have changed dramatically in the last few years, and it is no longer possible for a single company to resolve these issues alone. In Social Innovation Business, collaborative creation across companies and industries is vital, and there is a need to involve not only corporations but also NPOs and citizens to accelerate collaboration. This is truly a challenge requiring diversity and inclusion.

In creating value, we cannot offer value that meets the needs of local customers unless we understand the different cultures of other countries. Hence, we must learn more about diversity. Strong leadership is vital to better understand diverse values and subsequently converting them into business models. With various changes arising around the world today, we need to look at social issues from

three different axes; namely region, time, and people's values, in order to better comprehend diversity and inclusion. And we also need to step out of the Japanese lock-step culture and encourage people to move forward in their own directions.

The shape of leadership in the future

The roles of top management are to grasp the trends and changes taking place in the world, and to determine which direction to move forward.

What this implies is the necessity to back cast from a vision of the future you aspire to see, and share a concrete direction and strategy within the organization to bridge the gap between the vision and the current situation, and furthermore, to implement the strategy with solid determination. Important factors in realizing this include breaking free from the mold, and contemplating on the reason of one's being, and most importantly possessing an altruistic spirit.

If I were CEO, what kind of decisions would I take? This is the kind of question you should always ask yourself. Then, as a business manager, you need to act with resolve to put your decision into practice. As future leaders, I strongly encourage you to complement others for a better future of Japan and the world, rather than competing against them. Do not go by the book, and I would certainly advise all of you to be yourselves and develop your own unique style of leadership. If you are determined, your efforts will surely reap dividends in time. The future is something we forge and create by ourselves.

Mentor Profile

Toshiaki Higashihara

Vice Chair, Keidanren

Director, Representative Executive Officer, Executive Chairman & CEO Hitachi, Ltd.

June, 2021	Vice Chair, Keidanren
June, 2021	Director, Representative Executive Officer, Executive Chairman & CEO
April, 2016	Director, Representative Executive Officer, President & CEO
April, 2014	Representative Executive Officer, President & COO
April, 2013	Senior Vice President and Executive Officer
April, 2008	President, Hitachi Power Europe GmbH
April, 2007	Vice President and Executive Officer
April, 1977	Joined Hitachi, Ltd.

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